



GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
DEPARTMENT ON DISABILITY SERVICES

PRESS RELEASE



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GRADUATES WITH DISABILITIES READY FOR EMPLOYMENT

Washington, DC—During this season of high school and college graduations, a unique program with the Smithsonian Institution and Hilton Hotels is preparing young adults with disabilities to graduate into employment. Project SEARCH is a one-year Transition Program designed for students and young adults with disabilities who are in their last year of high school or who are recent high school graduates. The DC Department on Disability Services (DDS) has partnered with Seeking Employment, Equality and Community (SEEC) and Hilton – Capital Area Region (formerly Embassy Suites—DC), DC Public Schools and Ivymount School to prepare interns for competitive job opportunities.

The cornerstone of Project SEARCH is total workplace immersion. Interns are on worksites each day for a minimum of six hours and are given support with accommodations, adaptations and on-the-job coaching. After completing an extensive period of training and career exploration, job coaching and continuous feedback from employers, interns are often employed in nontraditional, complex and rewarding jobs. Below is the graduation schedule and details about the internships.

Friday, June 8

Project SEARCH Hilton Capital-Area Region Graduation

3 pm @ Embassy Suites Convention Center, 900 10th St., NW

Participants took part in three internship rotations across four corporate hotel host sites: Embassy Suites Convention Center DC, Capital Hilton, Doubletree Crystal City, and Embassy Suites Crystal City. Through the rotations, interns gained skills in the following areas: Front Office, Food and Beverage, Banquets, Stewarding, Laundry, Concierge, and Housekeeping.

For information: Ashlie.Roney@dc.gov or SEEC Program Manager Justine Zawatski at 215-801-3336.

Wednesday, June 13

Project SEARCH Smithsonian Institution Graduation

1:30 pm @ Castle Commons
1000 Jefferson Drive, SW

Project SEARCH interns immersed in the Smithsonian Institution workplace, received daily classroom instruction and rotated among three distinct internships in positions based on each jobseeker's strengths and interests. Examples of internships include Guest Services, Front Office, Mailroom, Data Entry, and Retail.

For information, contact Steve Blanks, SEEC Director of Workforce Development, sblanks@seeonline.org or 301-318-4848.

The Project SEARCH program model was developed at the Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center in 1996 and has been duplicated more than 200 times nationwide and internationally.

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The Department on Disability Services is a dynamic organization serving people with disabilities through the services of Developmental Disabilities Administration and the Rehabilitation Services Administration. This comprehensive collaborative approach provides innovative high quality services that enable people with disabilities to lead productive lives as vital members of their families, schools, workplaces, and communities. Learn more at www.dds.dc.gov and follow us at <https://www.facebook.com/DDS.DC>.